

Report to the Session and Congregation on the Deep Dive into Humility 2021

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Christ Presbyterian Church ECO

Executive Summary

Note: We wanted this to be easily understood and available soon after the Deep Dive into Humility ended. So feel free to read the executive summary. If you want to delve into more of the details, please read the portions of the Appendixes you are interested in.

Reason for this report. Christ Presbyterian Church undertook a Deep Dive into Humility for seven weeks during Lent of 2021. At the request of the Session, the Discipleship Team was charged with collecting and analyzing feedback on the Deep Dive for both Session and Congregational use to inform future possible “deep dives.”

Method. This led to an electronic survey to the members. We received 25 responses, which was estimated to be about half of the adults engaged with and attending CPC during this COVID-19 pandemic year. These are all Christ Pres people. We did not attempt to survey non-CPC attendees.

Major findings. Considering the limited number of responses, the major findings were these. (1) Most people enjoyed, evaluated positively, and grew in understanding from the Deep Dive. (2) Most people evaluated their practice of humility as better post-Deep Dive than before. (3) The two most popular and likely helpful events were the community-talks and sermons, though the Sunday morning women’s group was also named as very helpful. (4) There was endorsement of having additional deep dives in the future. (5) The topics people would like to see are several and include Christian virtues (those prominently mentioned are self-control, gratitude, peace, patience, the fruit of the Spirit, the seven traditional Christian virtues) but also more traditional Christian-living topics (like prayer, evangelism, discipleship and things like communication, money, etc.). (6) People made suggestions about timing of events and of the deep dive and ways the events are carried out.

Recommended actions. We recommend that the Session approve a deep dive for 2022. They are to approve some topic based on the feedback provided in the present report. The two popular times were Lent (recommended) and (second choice) just after school starts in 2022 (September 2021 would be too soon after the Humility deep dive).

Appendix to the Report to the Session and Congregation on the Deep Dive into Humility 2021

During Lent, 2021, Christ Presbyterian Church had a seven-week Deep Dive into Humility. We kicked this off on Ash Wednesday (February 17) and concluded it on Easter (April 4). We opened the feedback April 5 and closed it April 25. Responding to the feedback for program evaluation were 25 people. So that should introduce a note of caution in interpreting our findings. It's hard to know how many people we have actively engaged with Christ Pres right now given the COVID-19 disruption of "normality." But our responses are based only on those adults who responded to the online surveys. Not everyone had access to online surveys. Sometimes it is likely that one member of a couple responded, but not the other even though both were attending. Given the COVID-19 restrictions and chaos of the March 2020 to date (May 7, 2021), this report represents responses from *about 50* percent of the congregation.

The major events of the Deep Dive into Humility were a seven-week topical sermon series on humility by Kevin (0.5 hours exposure per sermon, max 3.5 hours), a five-week speaker series featuring 45-minute talks and 15-minute Q & A by Daryl Van Tongeren, Micah McCreary, Corey Widmer, Karen Carr and Darlene Jerome (jointly), and Donnie Davis (each talk + Q&A 1 hour, max 5 hours). Each talk was followed by an optional 30-minute small group interaction (0.5 hour per discussion; max 2.5 hours). Ev wrote a summary of each (0.75 hours max). In addition, two books were made available (without cost): Dane Ortlund's *Gentle and Lowly: Suffering* (max 3 hours) and Ev Worthington's *Humility: The Quiet Virtue* (max 1.5 hours) Two adult Sunday School classes—each lasting about an hour—discussed humility, including the books (1 hour each, max 7 hours). The maximum exposure to teaching on humility was from 0 to 23.25 hours. On the survey of 25 respondents, we had people respond who had attended as much as 18.75 hours and as little as 1.0 hour. The median (i.e., midpoint) was 10.0 hours of exposure.

What Events Did People Attend?

There were a maximum of 23.5 hours of structured exposure that people could have attended. Recall, the major events of the Deep Dive were:

- a seven-week topical sermon series on humility by Kevin (0.5 hours exposure per sermon, max 3.5 hours),
- a five-week speaker series featuring 45-minute talks and 15-minute Q & A (each talk + Q&A 1 hour, max 5 hours).
- Each talk was followed by an optional 30-minute small group interaction (0.5 hour per discussion; max 2.5 hours).
- Ev wrote a summary of each (0.75 hours max).

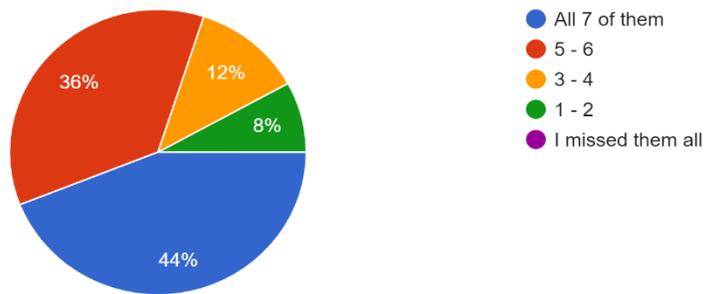
- Dane Ortlund’s *Gentle and Lowly: Suffering* (max 3 hours)
- Ev Worthington’s *Humility: The Quiet Virtue* (max 1.5 hours)
- Two adult Sunday School classes—each lasting about an hour—discussed humility, including the books (1 hour each, max 7 hours).

The maximum exposure to teaching on humility was from 0 to 23.25 hours.

Our respondents tended to hear most of the sermons by Kevin. 80% heard at least 5 of the 7 either online or in person, and 44% heard all seven.

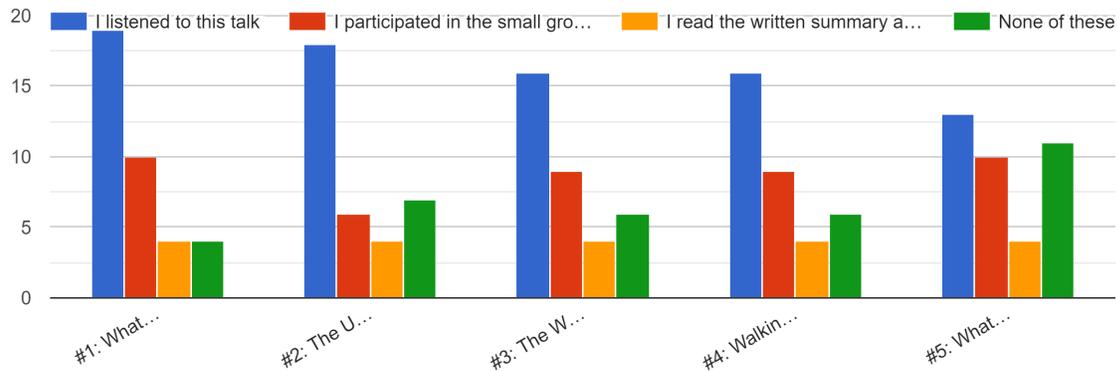
There were a total of seven Sunday sermons on the topic of humility. How many were you able to hear? (select one)

25 responses



Most of the respondents listened to the talks by our outside speakers. Of the 25 respondents, 19 heard Daryl, 18 heard Micah, 16 heard Corey, 16 heard Karen and Darlene, and 13 heard Donnie. So, there tended to be a slight erosion of numbers who listened to the talks as the speaker series went on. On the other hand, participation in the after-talk discussions were only half that of the talks, but the number of people who attended the small group (n=4) discussions after the talks did increase from 10 with Daryl, 6 with Micah, 9 with Corey, 9 with Karen and Darlene, and 10 with Donnie.

We had five Wednesday evening "Humility Talks" from different guest speakers. Check all the ways in which you participated:



In a free response, participants were asked, "Of all the things you were able to participate in, which would you say were the most helpful or meaningful to you?" Of the 25 respondents, 20 responses were given (although one was "Cannot really say").

- Sermons and talks
- Sermons! Also Van Tongeren talk (do all five talks were excellent).
- Loved the Breakout groups
- Kevin's sermon, the Wed night talks and discussions, the Sunday school focus on Dane Ortlund's writings
- The talk by Corey Widmer
- Wednesday talks had a lot of examples and practical life experiences from those sharing.
- Sermons and discussion with women's SS class
- A time in the past where one responded with humility
- Tie between Women's group and Wednesday talks
- Corey's talk, needing to prep for Karen's and my Wed eve, the Women's Sunday morning group going through Dane Ortlund's Gentle and Lowly devotionals - listening to the podcasts, reading the transcripts and the book - and discussing them on Sunday morning with 10+ other women.
- I haven't finished Dane Ortlund's book yet but it is SO good. The sermons have been rich as well.
- The Wed night talks and corresponding sermon series
- Cannot really say.
- I think a combo of the talks and sermons
- Wednesday night talks
- I really enjoyed reading EV's book

- Messages and home discussions and prayer
- Reading and journaling about Dane Ortlund's book and discussing in Sunday school was extremely meaningful. I wish my schedule had allowed me to be part of the Zoom talks.
- Sunday School

In summary, 12 mentioned the talks (or breakout), 6 mentioned the sermons, 3 mentioned the women's group either alone or two that tied to Ortlund's book) and 2 others mentioned Ortlund's book (not necessarily tied to women's Sunday School), 1 mentioned Sunday School (unspecified), 1 mentioned Ev's book, 1 mentioned a personal memory of a past response of humility. Probably fair to say that the speaker series was a giant success as was the sermon series by Kevin and the women's Sunday morning group was also important to people.

What Were the Outcomes of the Deep Dive into Humility?

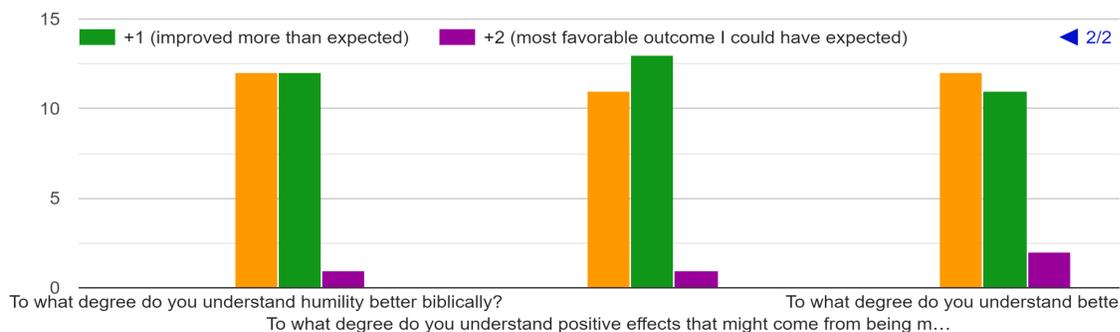
Did the Sheer Number of Hours Spent on Structured Activities During the Deep Dive into Humility (i.e., the “dose”) Help Understanding (Three Questions) and Practice (One Question) of Humility?

We might believe that people's practice of humility might depend on the number of activities they attended. We defined a “dosage” which was the number of hours of exposure people reported. The maximum people could have been exposed to was 23.5 hours. In practice, people who responded to the survey reported from 1 to 18.5 hours of exposure.

To help you understand what is to come, here's a word about Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS). This is unlike things we are used to seeing in which the midpoint of the rating, rated 0, means zero change. Rather, in GAS, the *-1 level indicates NO DIFFERENCE*. A 0 level indicates that the *person changed positively and got as much change as they expected*. If the person rated changes as +1 or +2, that means they changed positively AND got even more change than they originally expected.

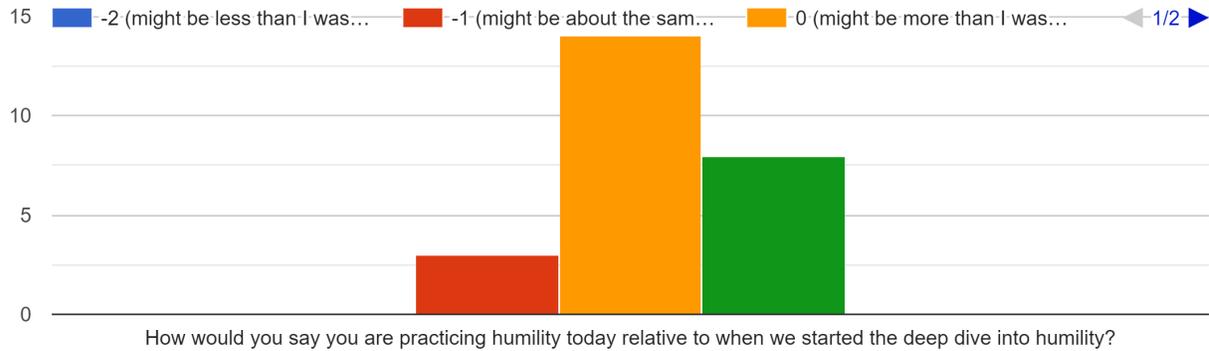
If we look at the graphs or people's ratings on how much they gained in understanding, all 25 respondents changed positively on every question. (Orange = 0; Green = +1; Purple = +2) No one rated -2 worse or even as -1 same as they started)

Now that the Deep Dive is over, please rate your degree of understanding based on each of the three statements below:



For the personal practice of humility, the scores were not quite as universally good, but close!! (Red = -1; Orange = 0; Green = +1; No one rated -2 worse or +2 as high as could be imagined) Three people rated their practice of humility unchanged. All 22 of the others rated their practice improved.

Now that the Deep Dive is over, please rate your practice of humility:



Amount of Exposure Affects What People Got Out of the Deep Dive

We ranked the responses by amount of exposure and split it at the median (that is the mid-point). Here is a listing of “dose” for each person and each’s corresponding ratings of outcomes.

Dose	GAS Understand biblically	GAS understand effects	GAS understand what humility is	GAS practice of humility
18.75	1	0	1	0
15.0	0	1	0	0
15.0	2	1	2	1
15.0	1	1	2	0
14.75	1	1	1	1
14.0	1	1	1	0
13.75	0	1	1	0
13.0	1	1	1	1
12.75	0	0	0	0

11.5	0	0	0	0
10.5	1	1	1	1
10.5	1	1	1	-1
Median split (above)	8/12	9/12	9/12	4/12 (1/12@-1)
10.0 (Median)	0	1	1	0
Median split (below)	5/12	4/12	3/12	4/12 (2/12@-1)
9.0	1	1	1	1
9.0	0	0	0	0
8.0	0	0	0	0
8.0	0	0	0	0
7.5	1	1	0	0
7.5	0	0	0	0
7.5	0	0	0	-1
6.0	0	0	0	0
5.0	1	1	1	1
4.5	1	2	1	1
2.0	1	0	0	1
1.0	0	0	0	-1
	5/12	4/12	3/12	4/12

In a quasi-scientific “eyeball analysis”—Bob Andrews, Dr. Stats, please pretend you didn’t see this—we can look at the 12 people scoring higher than the median and see how many rated their understanding above what they expected (i.e., at the +1 or +2 level). Then we compare that with 12 people scoring below the median as to those scoring at the +1 or +2 level.

Understanding of humility was increased by higher exposure. For biblical understanding 8 versus 5; for understanding the effects of humility, 9 versus 4; for understanding what humility is 9 versus 3.

For the practice of humility, however, it appears that the Deep Dive into Humility did not affect the people’s self-reported humility (4 versus 4).

The real key is to what degree did people feel that their practice of humility changed as a result of the deep dive. Generally, most people felt their practice of humility changed for the

better. Only 3 said no change at all. Of the 25, 14 thought their practice of humility was better but about what they anticipated it would be after a deep dive into humility. Eight thought their practice of humility exceeded their expectations (8 of 25 rated it +1).

Feedback about Future Deep Dives

If we do another deep dive series, what should we keep the same? What should we change? For example, should we do these deep dives once a year or consider twice a year? Are there any specific topics you would like to propose? What other feedback do you have for the discipleship Team and/or the Session? Altogether, we received 24 responses, but many had multiple recommendations. We included the verbatim responses as the Appendix. We tried to separate and group the suggestions below.

Should We Do Other Deep Dives in the Future?

Looks like a definite yes for doing more of these. Here are the grouped responses.

- Yes I think we should do more of these.
- I don't think I would do more than one a year, but one a year would be good if enough topics could be thought of that are relevant.
- The deep dive into humility was wonderful but it could have been better if more practical ways had been given for developing humility.
- Would love them during Advent & Lent
- Appreciate the variety of options. Weekly series good
- I'd love to continue to build a wider audience.
- For the next deep dive, it would be interesting to develop something experiential that could be a part of the learning (hands-on vs. book learning).
- I think 1x per year is a good frequency.
- When it comes to topics, I would look for things that are resonating with what is going on with our culture.
- This year's deep dive was really fantastic, and I'm so grateful for the work that went into it. It really showed. Thanks to everyone on the discipleship team. It was really a privilege to take part.
- Deep dives are good annually.
- Once a year is plenty
- Once a year.
- Once a year is good
- Next time ...
- Once a year or every other year would be enough for me, I think.
- If we did do another one....
- Don't do more than once a year. Quite frankly, as much as these are good times to focus on and start conversations around one topic I feel that I grow more from sermons and discussions that are based on going through a book of the Bible. Maybe build up the engagement side of the book of the Bible series, to have some of the community building that takes place during the deep dives?
- I think a one-month timeframe is enough. Seven weeks on one topic felt excessive.
- For those of us who are too far to attend I liked the format of the last deep dive.
- I think it was worthwhile.

- Either once a year or twice a year would work.
- I think once a year is probably sufficient.
- I have appreciated doing these deep dives with the whole church....

If So, What Should or Should Not Be Included in Them and Format Changes?

It is hard to discern patterns from these many responses. Generally, we might conclude that people liked the sermons and speakers. They generally liked the seven-week time frame, though there was some sentiment to shorten to a month. There were many other things that the Discipleship Team might consider when planning or thinking about planning future Deep Dives. One involved Wednesday night talks. Most seemed to like those, but some did not find them convenient.

- Talks were a great addition.
- I didn't do the journal or discussion on this particular topic because it seemed like it might be counterproductive (for me at least).
- Liked both a sermon series and the speakers
- I was not a big fan of the discussions afterwards and would probably prefer a 15 minute longer Q and A.
- it could have been better if more practical ways had been given for developing humility.
- Would love them during Advent & Lent
- Appreciate the variety of options. Weekly series good.
- Not sure about the time though. Wonder if we would have more participation if it were not so late.
- I thought the Wednesday nite sessions were great.
- There were too many for me to take in them all. Maybe 3-4 total would be better for me.
- I also appreciated the diversity in the presentations and the diversity of the audience. I'd love to continue to build a wider audience.
- For the next deep dive, it would be interesting to develop something experiential that could be a part of the learning (hands-on vs. book learning). So maybe there could be an event, community outreach or church-wide challenge or goal that would solicit further input. (In addition to the Sunday School groups.)
- I thought the format was good but Wednesday night 6:30 was a little early.
- A workshop in humility once a year (Is this a suggestion to consider workshops instead of deep dives?)
- Keep Wednesday talks
- I think we discovered that online can work for some things and involve people who might not ordinarily participate. Though it doesn't necessarily promote community within CPC cause it also draws folks who are not local or from our church congregation.
- Next time I think we might want to make a more concerted effort to offer other small group opportunities that meet at various times so people have choices besides Sunday am. Maybe that in place of or in addition to the early evening lecture option that seemed to mostly draw people without kids? I guess I'm trying to figure out how we can draw the younger couples with kids.

- I feel that I grow more from sermons and discussions that are based on going through a book of the Bible. Maybe build up the engagement side of the book of the Bible series, to have some of the community building that takes place during the deep dives?
- For those of us who are too far to attend I liked the format of the last deep dive.
- I would have liked a discussion question for the discussion time.
- I like when there's more discussion and interaction with the sermon topics in different arenas.
- Coinciding with Lent and Advent would be a good way to do it. I think if we were to do two, one month each would be good. More than a month seems a little too long.
- Really enjoyed the small groups, though wasn't always able to make that evening due to other commitments.
- Glad they were recorded so I could listen to them after the fact.
- All speakers were thought provoking.
- Might be good to have small groups meet on other nights for those unable to participate live, so the small group could watch the recorded sessions together and have more in-depth discussion.
- Other sermon series are good too.
- I have appreciated doing these deep dives with the whole church, but I'd rather not do it twice a year because it stops our regular Bible study.

Is Seven Weeks the Right Length of Program?

- I thought the Wednesday nite sessions were great. There were too many for me to take in them all. Maybe 3-4 total would be better for me.
- I think a one-month timeframe is enough. Seven weeks on one topic felt excessive.

Ideas of Needed Topics?

Some great suggestions below. Lots on Christian virtues. Some deep dives proposed for traditional Christian topics like a Bible book series, something experiential, a community program, etc. Also other deep dives were suggested on practical Christian living like kindness in families, communication, self-control, conflict and confrontation, money, evangelism. Some repeated sentiment about making sure the deep dives were practical, not just “book learning” or “theory” of prayer or evangelism, etc. We grouped these under two major headings: (1) Virtues or Fruit of the Spirit and (2) Topics in Christian Living.

Virtues or Fruit of the Spirit

- I recommend in order: Patience, Gratitude, Prayer.
- Peace. How to get peace. Joy how to sustain it during rough times. Kindness, especially in families. Communication skills could be included in that. Self-control including some very practical ways to develop self-control.
- I enjoyed the deep dive into humility, but other sermon series are good too. It would be interesting to go through the seven virtues, doing one at a time—e.g., humility, temperance (modern self-control, like resisting temptation, forgiveness, patience), charity (modern, love), diligence, patience, kindness, and chastity (modern modesty, sexual purity).

Topics in Christian Living

- Prayer (from above “Patience, Gratitude, Prayer”)
- Possible topics - grace, healing, conflict and confrontation
- It would be interesting to develop something experiential that could be a part of the learning (hands-on vs. book learning). So maybe there could be an event, community outreach or church-wide challenge or goal that would solicit further input. (In addition to the Sunday School groups.)
- When it comes to topics, I would look for things that are resonating with what is going on with our culture. For example, if humility had been going on during the election season, connecting those two topics. Or choosing a topic, like resilience or community, that connects to people's more surface felt-need during the pandemic. Of course, I don't think that there's any spiritual gift that is "out of season," but I do think that some are more timely than others.
- Evangelism as the topic
- If we did do another one, I would encourage us to consider discipleship/apprenticeship. My impression is that we come from a variety of backgrounds when it comes to this and are heading in a variety of directions as well!
- Maybe build up the engagement side of the book of the Bible series, to have some of the community building that takes place during the deep dives? If we do another deep dive, “joy” would be a strengthening and much-needed topic.
- Would you consider a deep dive into Luke as it relates to the training of disciples by Jesus?
- Deep dive on kingdom living in a family
- The enneagram
- We should consider a deep dive on money. Our church never talks about it, but the bible does over 2,000 times and the majority of Jesus's parables had to do with money.

Summary

In summary, the Deep Dive into Humility seemed helpful and provided enough stimulation and enjoyment and learning to use this as a basis for future Deep Dives. However, as with any church program, some people got cut out of specific activities for personal reasons, and there was a desire to make scheduling more convenient. In addition, some activities spoke to people's hearts and others to their minds. People tend to have strong feelings about what kinds of activities appeal to them and what kinds they find spiritually useful (and useful in other ways as well). It is unlikely that any church program will result in universal approval, but these Deep Dives, especially if we are able to tweak them to consider feedback from the congregation, are something positive within the life of the congregation and are useful as an outreach to other churches in Richmond and people who have come into contact with Christ Presbyterian Church and with whom we still have a relationship.

Raw Data

Verbatim Open-ended Responses to Request about Feedback on Future Deep Dives

- Talks were a great addition. I didn't do the journal or discussion on this particular topic because it seemed like it might be counterproductive (for me at least).
- Same. Liked both a sermon series and the speakers, and I thought the nighttime 6:30 to 8 time was the best. I was not a big fan of the discussions afterwards and would probably prefer a 15 minute longer Q and A. Yes I think we should do more of these. I recommend in order: Patience, Gratitude, Prayer.
- I don't think I would do more than one a year, but one of year would be good if enough topics could be thought of that irrelevant. Great fun to see people who used to go to Christ pres come back with their wonderful knowledge. Peace. How how to get peace. Joy how to sustain it during rough times. Kindness, especially in families. Communication skills could be included in that. Self control including some very practical ways to develop self-control.
- The deep dive into humility was wonderful but it could have been better if more practical ways had been given for developing humility.
- Would love them during Advent & Lent
- Appreciate the variety of options. Weekly series good - not sure about the time though. Wonder if we would have more participation if it were not so late. Possible topics - grace, healing, conflict and confrontation
- I thought the Wednesday nite sessions were great. There were too many for me to take in them all. Maybe 3-4 total would be better for me. I also appreciated the diversity in the presentations and the diversity of the audience. I'd love to continue to build a wider audience.
- For the next deep dive, it would be interesting to develop something experiential that could be a part of the learning (hands-on vs. book learning). So maybe there could be an event, community outreach or church-wide challenge or goal that would solicit further input. (In addition to the Sunday School groups.)
- I think 1x per year is a good frequency.
- When it comes to topics, I would look for things that are resonating with what is going on with our culture. For example, if humility had been going on during the election season, connecting those two topics. Or choosing a topic, like resilience or community, that connects to people's more surface felt-need during the pandemic. Of course, I don't think that there's any spiritual gift that is "out of season," but I do think that some are more timely than others.
- This year's deep dive was really fantastic, and I'm so grateful for the work that went into it. It really showed. Thanks to everyone on the discipleship team, and especially Ev, for the efforts that went into making this such a success. It was really a privilege to take part.
- I thought the format was good but Wednesday night 6:30 was a little early. Deep dives are good annually.
- Once a year is plenty
- Once a year. Evangelism as the topic
- A workshop in humility once a year
- Keep Wednesday talks, once a year is good

- It was challenging to pull this off during this Covid season. But Ev and Kevin, your commitment paid off! Thanks!
- I think we discovered that online can work for some things and involve people who might not ordinarily participate. Though it doesn't necessarily promote community within CPC cause it also draws folks who are not local or from our church congregation.
- Next time I think we might want to make a more concerted effort to offer other small group opportunities that meet at various times so people have choices besides Sunday am. Maybe that in place of or in addition to the early evening lecture option that seemed to mostly draw people without kids? I guess I'm trying to figure out how we can draw the younger couples with kids.
- Once a year or every other year would be enough for me, I think. I have missed your expository preaching while going through a book, Kevin.
- If we did do another one, I would encourage us to consider discipleship/apprenticeship. My impression is that we come from a variety of backgrounds when it comes to this and are heading in a variety of directions as well!
- Don't do more than once a year. Quite frankly, as much as these are good times to focus on and start conversations around one topic I feel that I grow more from sermons and discussions that are based on going through a book of the Bible. Maybe build up the engagement side of the book of the Bible series, to have some of the community building that takes place during the deep dives? If we do another deep dive, "joy" would be a strengthening and much-needed topic.
- I think a one month timeframe is enough. Seven weeks on one topic felt excessive.
- For those of us who are too far to attend I liked the format of the last deep dive. I would have liked a discussion question for the discussion time. Would you consider a deep dive into Luke as it relates to the training of disciples by Jesus?
- No ideas
- I think it was worthwhile. I like when there's more discussion and interaction with the sermon topics in different arenas. I do not remember seeing the pre and post assessment questions; maybe I did and forgot. I don't think I got any emails about the blog posts like we did with the previous deep dive so that's why I didn't read them. I'll go check them out now.
- Either once a year or twice a year would work. Coinciding with Lent and Advent would be a good way to do it. I think if we were to do two, one month each would be good. More than a month seems a little too long. Really enjoyed the small groups, though wasn't always able to make that evening due to other commitments. Glad they were recorded so I could listen to them after the fact. All speakers were thought provoking. Might be good to have small groups meet on other nights for those unable to participate live, so the small group could watch the recorded sessions together and have more in-depth discussion.
- I think once a year is probably sufficient. I enjoyed the deep dive into humility, but other sermon series are good too. It would be interesting to go through the seven virtues, doing one at a time.
- Deep dive on kingdom living in a family

- I have appreciated doing these deep dives with the whole church, but I'd rather not do it twice a year because it stops our regular Bible study.
- The enneagram
- We should consider a deep dive on money. Our church never talks about it, but the bible does over 2,000 times and the majority of Jesus's parables had to do with money.